A

LETTER

TO

SOAME JENYNS, Esq.

[Price One Shilling.]

A

LETTER

TO

SOAME JENYNS, Esq.

WHEREIN THE

FUTILITY AND ABSURDITY

OF

SOME PART OF HIS REASONING

IN HIS

View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion,

IS

SET FORTH AND EXPOSED.

BY A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON.
Printed for the Author, and sold by R. Baldwin, No. 47, in Paternoster-Row.
MDCCLXXVI.

TO

SOAME JENYNS, Esq.

SIR,

WHEN I conſider your late publication as that of a man of faſhion, retiring to his cloſet from a diſſipated world, to give the momentous points of religion a due examination; to weigh thoſe arguments on which hang an immortality; to attend to his own ſalvation, and teach the important truth to others; when I conſider your *View of the internal Evidence of Chriſtianity* in this light, I am charmed with the production, I admire its deſign, and revere its author: I will allow you alſo the cre-

dit of writing liberally, like a gentleman, and, in point of compoſition, of giving the world a correct and claſſical performance: but, leſt * "thoſe idle and buſy "perſons whoſe time and thoughts are "wholly engroſſed in worldly purſuits, "and who know nothing of religion, but "what they pick up by deſultory con-"verſation and ſuperficial reading;" leſt theſe perſons, for whom you profeſs to write, ſhould miſtake the ſhadow for the ſubſtance, quit the reaſoner to admire the orator, adopt the argument for its embelliſhments, and thus your work be productive of more harm than good; give me leave to make ſome few remarks on it, and point out the futility of ſome of your aſſertions.

---

* Page 180. edit. 2d.

To

To give it a laboured reply would be, perhaps, paying the exceptionable parts too high a compliment; my obſervations are curſory, ſuch only as offered themſelves on the firſt reading, but yet ſuch, I hope, as will not be deemed nugatory.

That chriſtianity is a *new* religion in its *doctrines*, I grant, but not ſo with regard to its *object*; * I mean a State of Happineſs hereafter. That ſome of the philoſophers of antiquity entertained notions of a future ſtate you admit, but mixed with much doubt and incertitude; and that their legiſlators endeavoured to infuſe a belief of rewards and puniſhments: but, by this, ſay you, they intended only to give a ſanction to their laws, and enforce the practice of virtue for the be-

* Page 17.

nefit of mankind, in the preſent life*. That a ſtate of futurity, before the coming of the Meſſiah, was dark and perplexed, enveloped with error, and ſhaded by obſcurity, is too evident to be diſputed: Chriſt came and turned their twilight into perfect day: but, that the Heathen philoſophers doubted the exiſtence of ſuch a ſtate, is more than can be fairly made out. Every ſect of men, that preſcribed morality, taught a future or an after-life. Nothing in thoſe ages was more generally believed. Their tribunal below, where *Minos*, *Æacus* and *Rhadamanthus* ſat as judges, was emblematical of our laſt judgment; their *Elyſian Fields* were but a poetical Paradiſe, and their *Phlegethon*, or River of Fire, was deſigned to expreſs our imaginary lake of

* Page 21.

fire

fire and brimſtone. *Seneca* clearly points out to us a future ſtate, "wherein the "ſoul," ſays he, "will have ſufficient "cauſe to congratulate its own happineſs, "when it ſhall be delivered out of that "darkneſs in which it is here involved, "and return to heaven." **Plato* alſo affirms, "that the ſouls of good men "enter into a better, and thoſe of evil "men into a worſe, ſtate than before." And *Cicero* introduces *Socrates* thus arguing: "There are two ways of depart-"ing ſouls, leading to two contrary "ſtates, happineſs and miſery; thoſe who "had defiled themſelves with ſenſual "vices, let looſe the reins to their luſts, "and had been injurious to the common-"wealth, are dragged to a place of tor-

---

* I have given the paſſages in Engliſh, for the ſake of general readers,

"ment,

" ment, and for ever excluded from the
" bleſſed ſociety above; but thoſe who
" had preſerved their integrity and chaſ-
" tity, whilſt united to the body, and
" had imitated the divine life of the celeſ-
" tial inhabitants, by an eaſy and open
" way, returned to that God from whom
" they firſt came." *Tully*, ſpeaking, in another place of the crime of ſhortening our own exiſtence, has this remarkable paſſage. " All good men, as they will
" anſwer that character, are obliged to
" be chearful and eaſy under the ſoul's
" durance and confinement in the body,
" till the Author of their immortal beings
" ſhall releaſe them; if ever they would
" eſcape the guilt and charge of aban-
" doning that poſt which Providence
" has aſſigned them. There is no ex-
" pecting to get ſafe above, unleſs men

" wait

" wait till their diſmiſſion comes from " God."*

The notion of a future judgment was ſo univerſally received among the Heathens, that when St. Paul *reaſoned about it*, even *Felix*, whoſe vices had made a diſbelief of it almoſt neceſſary to his peace, *trembled*. And the ſame apoſtle, diſcourſing to the Athenians, the great lights of the Gentile world, and teaching them *that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world*; † though he found ſome that mocked, when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, there were none that objected any thing againſt the day of judgment. Beſides, what, but a thorough conviction of a future ſtate of

---

* Cicero, in Somn. Scip. † Acts, xvii. 31.

rewards

rewards and punishments, could have induced that celebrated heathen *Attilius Regulus* to have endured a most cruel and painful death, rather than betray his country, or break his oath? After all this, can it be said that a world to come is a *new* doctrine; or that a future state of rewards and punishments was taught merely to give a sanction to human laws? It might conduce to that end, 'tis true; but even then, as now, had not thinking men within their breasts a secret monitor, that impressed the awful truth upon their minds, they would have sinned within the pale of law, and sat their teachers at defiance. *Tiberius*, in his letter to the senate, would not, but under this alarming impulse, have confessed the agonizing torments of his mind; nor would *Nero* have trembled in the temple of the Gods.

In

In all ages of the world, then, men were taught to believe a future ſtate; but *Chriſt* only *hath brought life and immortality to* light, *through the goſpel.* The philoſophers of old had more than confuſed notions of an after-life; though the miſts of error and uncertainty were not *totally* diſpelled till the breaking out of chriſtianity.

The next novel aſſertion I meet with, for you pride yourſelf in *novelties*, is, that the celebrated virtues Patriotiſm and Friendſhip are fictitious only, "without any intrinſic merit in themſelves, "and totally incompatible with the ge-"nius and ſpirit of chriſtianity."* In conſidering theſe virtues, for *virtues* I

* Page 52.

muſt call them, notwithſtanding you take ſuch pains to depreciate them; I ſay, in conſidering theſe virtues, I ſhall have occaſion only to dwell any length of time upon the latter; for patriotiſm and friendſhip may be conſidered in one and the ſame light; patriotiſm being a partiality for one *country* among the many, and friendſhip a predilection for one *man* among the many: and, it being allowed by thoſe who have made the duties of ſcripture their ſtudy, that the kindred virtues are as well injoined under one command, as the kindred vices forbidden under one prohibition; if, therefore, I can make it appear that *friendſhip* is a chriſtian duty, I may from analogy infer the ſame with re-reſpect to *patriotiſm*. Indeed, patriotiſm and friendſhip are *ſpecies*, where love is the *genus*: for love takes up various names from the

various

various objects to which it is addreſſed, as the ſea takes different names from the ſeveral ſhores it ſalutes. Thus, as it looks upwards to ſuperiors, it becomes *patriotiſm* to a country, *duty* to a governor, *piety* to a parent, and *gratitude* to a benefactor. As it looks downwards on inferiors, it becomes *mercy* to an offender, *charity* to the indigent, and *pity* to the diſtreſſed. As it looks round about on equals, we call it *kindneſs*. And if among theſe it meets with any fitly qualified to reciprocate the offices of kindneſs, it then becomes *friendſhip*.

However, as the *ſcriptures are given for our learning and encouragement*, the deſign of our Saviour's coming into the world being *not to* deſtroy *the law and the prophets, but to* fulfil *them*, I might thence

deduce that patriotiſm is little leſs than a *chriſtian* virtue; Nehemiah, Eſther, and others, being in thoſe ſcriptures immortalized for their patriotic zeal and public ſpirit: but, as I obſerved before, friendſhip and patriotiſm being ſpecies of love, branches from the ſame ſtock; and *love being the fulfilling* or completion *of the law*, I ſhall confine my obſervations to the former, and, in ſhewing that ſo far from friendſhip's being *incompatible* with the genius of chriſtianity, it is highly *conſonant*, with it; I hope it will appear to every unprejudiced reader that patriotiſm is no leſs reſpectable: for, as in the commandment *thou ſhall not kill*, is implied a prohibition of every ſpecies of murder, taking away a *character* as taking away a *life*, ſo the command *thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf* includes

cludes an injunction of love in all its degrees, from univerſal benevolence to its centre, *friendſhip*. Thus.

Univerſal Benevolence,

Patriotiſm,

Friendship.

Beſides, Sir, you ſeem to have very confined ideas of patriotiſm when you ſay it is *ſelfiſh*; "that it commands us to oppreſs "all other countries to advance the imaginary proſperity of our own; and to "copy the mean partiality of an Engliſh "Pariſh Officer, who thinks injuſtice "and cruelty meritorious, whenever "they promote the intereſts of his own "inconſiderable village." * You ſeem

* Page 59.

to

to be equally miſtaken, when you define *valour* to be the vindictive ſpirit of a revengeful man. (For who more patient, 'till trampled on, than the truly brave?) Can you ſuppoſe that patriotiſm implies a ſerving our *own* country at the expence of every other? In this light, indeed, it is a ſelfiſh and an *unchriſtian* principle; but my ideas of it are widely different. I conceive patriotiſm perfectly conſiſtent with that chriſtian doctrine, a *denial of one's ſelf.* It, in fact, implies a ſacrifice of one's *own* intereſt, if neceſſary, to promote the *public* good: the leaping of a *Curtius* into the gulph, to free the city of Rome from its calamities.

A true patriot will correſpond with the deſigns of Providence, when he made man

an intelligent creature, and capable of ſociety.

A true patriot will fulfil thoſe engagements men enter into, when they collect themſelves in towns, and put themſelves under the protection of government, with a view of reaping the advantages reſulting from that aſſemblage of people that compoſe a public body.

A true patriot will coincide with the principles of religion, which never ſuppoſed us to live in foreſts and deſarts, apart from the commerce of the world; but communicating with each other, and forming ſocieties wherein are ſovereigns and ſubjects, maſters and ſervants.

A true

A true patriot is the object of all our wiſhes; he is looked up to, as a father of the people, is loaded with their bleſſings, and enjoys a ſecret ſatisfaction ariſing from a goodneſs of heart; whereas he who abuſes the public truſt is an object of the people's hate, is conſidered as a ſcourge of Providence, a public blood-ſucker, who feeds upon the ſubſtance of others, and from whom every one prays to heaven for deliverance.

In ſhort; a true patriot, like the true chriſtian, is "a citizen of the world," * and his principal ſtudy is the happineſs of the people. How delightful muſt it be, to live in a ſtate, where every individual aims at public good, and where public good reverts on every individual; where royalty has no view but the happineſs of the people,

* Page 58.

and

and where the people have no view but the honourable ſupport of royalty; where the great are affable, where taxes are paid with chearful exactneſs, where the polite arts are encouraged, and where every man receives the reward of his ſervices!

A true patriot, in procuring the *temporal* happineſs of the people, has an eye alſo to their *eternal*. There is often an intimate connexion between the peace of the ſtate and the peace of the church; and there is often an intimate relation between that peace we enjoy in the church, and that we expect hereafter; for we ſeldom find under a bad government that tranquility we need, in order to inſtruct and animate each other in the cauſe of virtue, and to make good morals and religion flouriſh.

How far this kind of patriotism is *selfish*, how far it "commands us to oppress "all other countries to advance the ima- "ginary prosperity of our own," or "to copy the mean partiality of a parish "officer, who thinks injustice and cru- "elty meritorious whenever they pro- "mote the interests of his own inconsi- "derable village," is only in the sophistry of a *Soame Jenyns* to make out.

Far *more* mistaken are you, when you advance that friendship, in its utmost purity, deserves no recommendation from the religion of Christ, *because* "its pre- "cepts are too narrow and confined, and "appropriates that benevolence to a sin- "gle object, which christianity commands "to be extended over all." *

* Page 60.

In

In anſwer to this, let it be conſidered, that though friendſhip contracts our affections to a few ſelect objects, it will in no wiſe impair or hinder the great duty of chriſtian benevolence; for benevolence can, like the ſun, ſhine on all mankind, though it ſtrike on *ſome* with a more direct and warmer ray; or, like a well-drawn picture, it can caſt a look on all about it, though it may have a peculiar aſpect for one in a given place and diſtance. As a leſſon on patriotiſm as well as friendſhip, St. Paul, in his epiſtle to the Galatians, ſuppoſes a different love on different occaſions: "*As we have oppor-*
"*tunity*, ſays he, *let us do good to all*
"*men*, ESPECIALLY *unto them that are of*
"*the houſhold of faith*;" * and with pa-

* Gal. vi. 10.

rity of reaſon may it be ſaid, that we may be differently affected towards thoſe of the ſame faith, of the ſame country with ourſelves, or towards our brethren of the ſame houſhold, as they differently excel in chriſtian virtues, and as circumſtances conſpire to give us a fitter opportunity of maintaining an intercourſe of friendſhip with them. That friendſhip is countenanced in the old teſtament, I need only mention an expreſſion or two of Solomon. *A friend*, ſays he, *loveth at all times, and is a brother born for adverſity*;* and, in another place, *a friend will ſtick cloſer than a brother.*† And God himſelf, in cautioning Iſrael againſt the inticements of thoſe who were like to gain the aſcendency, places a friend

* Prov. xvii. 17. † Prov. xviii. 24.

in

in the higheſt rank, above a brother, a ſon, or the wife of the boſom, and calls him a friend which is even *as thine own ſoul!** Nay, the Saviour of Mankind, the Inſtitutor of our religion, conceived ſo exalted an idea of this virtue, that he approved of a man's laying down even his *life* for a friend.† Such a friend was Jonathan to David ‡, that neither the hatred of a father, nor the flattery of a crown could corrupt him. He would not yield up his friend, though Saul with armed fury ſtormed the boſom that entertained him; nor would let go his friendſhip, though he knew it would coſt him the reverſion of a kingdom; but, with an unſhaken reſolution, he perſiſted to plead David's

---

* 1 Sam. xx. 17. † 1 John xv. 13.

‡ Sam. xviii, xix, xx, &c.

cauſe,

cauſe, though to the prejudice of his own; to advance his praiſe, though to his own diminution; and to ſecure his *friend*, though at the hazard of *himſelf*. And, as a further proof that friendſhip is authoriſed by the *new* teſtament, we have the *example* of our bleſſed Mediator, the author of chriſtianity, who had his *beloved* diſciple,* and expreſſed a particular *friendſhip* for Lazarus and his ſiſters.† And we have great reaſon to conceive one part of the glorious happineſs of heaven to conſiſt in the moſt refined and exalted *friendſhips* of angels and ſaints made perfect, where the pooreſt Lazarus reſts in the boſom of the greateſt Abraham, and all cloſely unite in the ſame harmony of love and praiſe.

---

* *John.*

† John xi. 5, &c.

Leſt

Leſt it ſhould be objected that ſome of the arguments I have made uſe of are taken from the old teſtament, from times of ignorance, before chriſtianity was known, it will, I hope, be ſufficient to ſay, that they are taken only from the canonical books of the old teſtament, ſuch as are read by the chriſtian church to eſtabliſh doctrines, ſuch as our Saviour thought proper to corroborate, as I obſerved before, in ſaying, "*Think not I* "*am come to deſtroy the law and the pro-* "*phets*; *I am not come to deſtroy but to* "*fulfill*:" and that the *old* teſtament is conſidered as conſonant with the *new*, the ſeventh article of our religion, drawn up by the Reformers, is the ſtrongeſt proof; where we are taught, that tranſitory promiſes were not the *only* object of good men in ancient times. The words are

theſe: "The old teſtament is not con-
"trary to the new; for both in the old
"and new teſtament everlaſting life is
"offered to mankind by Chriſt, who is
"the only mediator between God and
"man, being both God and man.
"Wherefore they are not to be heard
"which feign that the old fathers did
"look only for *tranſitory* promiſes.
"Although the law given from God to
"Moſes, as touching ceremonies and
"rights, do not bind chriſtian men,
"nor the civil precepts thereof, ought
"of neceſſity to be received in any
"commonwealth; yet, notwithſtanding,
"no *chriſtian* man whatever is free from
"the obedience of the commandments
"which are called *moral*."

The next exceptionable paſſage we meet with is a declaration ſubverſive of the order

order of government, which cannot be preſerved without the regular payment of impoſts; the doing of which, however important, ſay you, it may be deemed by others, is no part of the duty of a *chriſtian*; the chriſtian legiſlator having every where preſerved a remarkable ſilence on that head*. *Smuggling*, therefore, and *cheating* the King, with you, is no crime; and of courſe puniſhments for ſuch offences muſt be tyrannical and cruel.

That obedience to government is a chriſtian duty, and that the policy of ſtates is conſonant with the ſpirit of chriſtianity, is ſufficiently clear; and if, Sir, you had made that "candid enquiry†" you have profeſſed, you need not now

---

* Page 62. † Page 190.

have been told it. *Let every ſoul*, ſays St. Paul, *be ſubject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whoſoever, therefore, reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.*" * So likewiſe St. Peter, "*Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.*† Now, however fallible theſe men may have been, and however uninſpired at particular times, it muſt be ſuppoſed that they ſpoke with the tongue of inſpiration here, as they were teaching a moral duty, and that in

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. † 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

the

the name of their Leader. But leſt this aſſertion of mine ſhould be diſputed, I have the words of Chriſt himſelf to corroborate it. At his examination before Pilate, when the governor thus addreſſed him on his ſilence, *Speakeſt thou not unto me? Knoweſt thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee?* he thus replied, *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above.** And on being aſked, whether it was *lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar or not?* he returned, *Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? They ſay unto him, Cæſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, Render, therefore, unto Cæſar the things which are*

* John xix. 10, 11.

Cæſar's; as conſcientiouſly as *Unto God the things that are God's.* * Nay, rather than refuſe tribute in his own perſon, he put himſelf to the expence of a miracle to pay it.† You may poſſibly account this ſtory, like many others, fabulous and falſe; but if this is not neceſſary to be believed, then are no part of all the ſacred writings.

I might proceed to ſhew the futility and abſurdity of ſome other of your propoſitions, as that "reaſon in her natural "ſtate is incapable of making any pro-"greſs in knowledge;"‡ that "reve-"lation has not been extended to all

* Matt. xxii. 17, 19, 20, 21.

† Matt. xvii. 24, &c.

‡ Page 120.

"man-

" mankind in general, becauſe a total " exemption from ſin and puniſhment " is utterly repugnant to the univerſal " ſyſtem which infinite Wiſdom has " thought proper to adopt," &c.* But theſe having been diſcuſſed by abler pens than mine, it would be preſumption in me to attempt it; I ſhall content myſelf with having ſhewn the inconcluſiveneſs of thoſe arguments you have uſed in ſupport of aſſertions, which, if generally believed, might be productive of harm to ſociety, and ſhall take my leave of you with ſaying, that a perſon who ſits down to teach others, however he may amuſe *himſelf* with fallacious reaſoning, ſhould be exceedingly cautious in what

---

* Page 158, 159.

he

he advances, leſt, while he labours to do good, he ſhould be little leſs deſtructive to his fellow-creatures.

**** *******.

FINIS.

Juſt publiſhed,

By R. Baldwin, *a very valuable little Pocket Volume, called*

The PHYSICAL FRIEND;

Pointing out the Symptoms of every Diſtemper incident to Man; with thoſe in every Stage of the Diſeaſe, and what they foretell.

Carefully collected from the beſt Medical Authors, and ſyſtematically arranged, with the Authorities, by *J. A.* M. D. and F. R. S. Together with an Alphabetical Index of the ſame Symptoms; by which the ſick Perſon, refering to any one that attacks him, may find out his Diſorder, and his real Situation.

By an occaſional Recourſe to this Book, many a tormenting and expenſive Sickneſs may be prevented, and many a Life be ſaved; for even fatal Diſorders are, at firſt, but ſlight Indiſpoſitions, of courſe the ſick Perſon, not aware of his Danger, has too often delayed ſeeking for a Remedy, till the Diſtemper has gained too much ground to be eaſily overcome, and perhaps has deſtroyed him, when by oppoſing it in time, he might readily have recovered.

In this Work, Phyſical Terms are purpoſely avoided, that it may be underſtood by every reader; being calculated to ſhew the Danger of particular Diſeaſes in their firſt Attack; in what caſes it is neceſſary to call in Advice, and in certain ſituations what Hopes there are of Recovery.